

to engage in interstate commerce shall file a statement showing stock, liabilities, indebtedness, etc., and applying for authority to engage in interstate commerce, and the commission is not allowed to grant such authority if the statement shows any watered stock or if the corporation is attempting to monopolize or control the manufacture, product, sale or transportation of any article of trade or merchandise.

The president is authorized, upon the recommendation of this commission, to suspend wholly or partially for such time as he may direct, the collection of import dues on such articles as compete with articles produced by any corporation which is attempting to monopolize an industry. If any official of a corporation or member of an association of individuals is guilty of perjury in making the statements provided for in the bill he shall be subject to the penalties provided for perjury. All corporations attempting to engage in interstate commerce without first complying with the conditions of the act and obtaining a license from the commission shall pay a tax of 10 per cent on the capital stock issued and outstanding, and the same annual tax is levied upon all stock issued in excess of the actual money invested in the enterprise.

Such, in brief, is the Shallenberger bill, a copy of which will be found upon another page. The bill is in line with the Kansas City platform and is a much more effective measure than anything proposed by the republicans or likely to be proposed by them: It places the entire matter of interstate commerce under the control of the commission to be created. Corporations organized for the purpose of engaging in a purely state industry are not at all interfered with or embarrassed, but a corporation organized to engage in interstate commerce must secure a license before going outside of the state of its origin. The attempt to engage in interstate commerce might be more accurately defined as the use, or attempted use, of railroads, telegraph lines or the mails for any business outside of the state in which the corporation is created.

This bill does not interfere with the right of the state to create any corporation it needs for its own use, but it makes it impossible for a state to convert itself into a den of thieves and organize great industrial combinations to prey upon the rest of the country. The bill ought to provide that the license issued by the commission is not to interfere with the right of every state to regulate foreign corporations doing business in the state. The license contemplated is simply a license that permits the state corporation to engage in interstate commerce—it cannot leave the state of its origin without obtaining this license—but when the license is obtained it does not protect the corporation, or should not, from the laws deemed necessary by any state for the protection of its own people. In other words, the federal remedy should be added to the state remedy, not substituted for it.

The bill ought to go a little farther in the way of penalties. The tax to be collected is all right, but there should be a criminal penalty imposed upon any corporation official who attempts to engage in interstate commerce before the license is obtained, or who in any way takes part in the issue of watered stock. The bill should also provide for the revocation of the license by the commission whenever the corporation violates the conditions upon which the license was granted, and when the license is revoked the interstate business of the corporation must be suspended until a new license is issued.

The Shallenberger bill is sound in principle and would be effective in practice. Instead of compelling the government to search the country for violations of the law it would compel the corporations to seek the government and obtain a license before engaging in business. The system proposed by the bill is similar to the license system now in operation, but much more easily enforced. If the government attempted to collect a tax from each liquor dealer after he had sold liquor, or attempted to enforce provisions against persons who sold without first requiring a license, it would find its task a very difficult one. But when it requires the payment of the license fee in advance the work becomes much easier. In the case of a corporation it could not do much interstate business without being detected. Under such a law it would be as impossible for a corporation to do any real harm without the fact coming to the knowledge of the government.

The democrats in the senate and house ought to agree upon a substitute which follows the lines of the Shallenberger bill and offer it in lieu of the republican measure. Such a substitute would draw the line between honest and effective legislation desired by the democrats and the weak and

partial measures thus far proposed by the republicans.

If it is thought an unnecessary requirement to compel all corporations engaged in interstate commerce to take out the license a beginning might be made by requiring it of all corporations having a capital of more than a certain amount, fixing the same low enough so that no monopoly can be secured.

It is imperative that the democrats shall take a positive and aggressive position. Criticism is well enough in its way, but affirmative action is necessary for a party that proposes to do something in the interest of the masses of the people.

Stricken Sweden.

Within the last two or three weeks the world has been shocked by the receipt of the news that thousands of people in northern Sweden and neighboring Finland are threatened with death by starvation. The crops in those sections were a total failure last season, and the poorer classes, always struggling against adverse fate in that far northern country, find themselves face to face with starvation. King Oscar, the kindest and gentlest monarch of Europe, has issued an appeal for help, addressing it to all Christendom, and the appeal should not—and will not—be made in vain. The stories of suffering and death that come from the stricken sections should open the hearts and purses of the people of every country, and the United States, usually first and never last in the work of giving aid to the needy, should not now be slow in making response to the appeal for help. Ties of blood bind hundreds of thousands of American citizens to Sweden, for that far-off land has given to this republic many of her staunchest citizens who, while true Americans, still love the bleak hills and frozen fjords of their native land.

Help should be given at once. He who gives quickly gives twice. Generous readers of *The Commoner* who desire to help the starving people of Sweden and Finland may rest assured that money sent to the Swedish relief committee at Lincoln, Neb., will find its way without delay to the relief committee at Stockholm. The Lincoln committee is composed of Mayor H. J. Winnett, C. J. Olson, Dr. L. Anderson, C. J. Warner, Mrs. O. W. Palm, Mrs. B. Wernstedt and Mrs. C. J. Roman, all personally known to the editor. All contributions should be addressed to Mrs. B. Wernstedt, treasurer, 307 Richards block, Lincoln, Neb., and receipt will be duly acknowledged.

A Deserved Compliment.

The democrats of Illinois honored themselves as well as complimented a deserving man when they made Congressman James R. Williams the minority candidate for the United States senate. Mr. Williams has had a long and honorable career in congress and he has always been a faithful champion of democratic principles. Some congressmen and senators have allowed their long residence in Washington and their intimate association with those who hang about the federal capital to wean them away from the interests of their constituents. Not so with Mr. Williams. He has maintained his democratic simplicity and his democratic integrity and stands today as a conspicuous representative of true democracy, devoting his extraordinary ability and his untiring energy to the interests of the people. Illinois has many able and faithful democrats, but none who have done more than Mr. Williams to earn the compliment unanimously paid him by his party in the Illinois legislature.

The Real Difference.

The editor of *The Commoner* is in receipt of a letter from a man born in Russia, but recently naturalized. He says that he appreciates the responsibility of citizenship and desires to discharge his duty intelligently and patriotically. He has some difficulty in deciding with which party to act, because he says that the party names represent the same ideas of government, and that if the parties are true to their names they are much alike. Yet, thinking there must be a wide distinction to justify active party contests, he asks for information as to the real distinction between them.

The party names themselves do not indicate any essential difference between the parties. In fact, the democratic party, when organized by Jef-

erson, was known as the republican party. As the democratic title brings out the idea that the people rule, while the republican name emphasizes the fact that the rule is through representatives, it might be argued that the democratic party would bring the government a little nearer to the people, while the republican party would have more faith in representatives of the people than in the people themselves, and yet this distinction is not necessarily indicated by the names, although there is this general distinction between the beliefs of many of the members of the two parties. It is not unusual, however, for party names to be twisted from their original meaning and applied to different ideas at different times. The democratic party stands for the doctrine of "equal rights to all and special privileges to none." It protests against the use of the government for the benefit of a few at the expense of the many, whether this favoritism be shown in a protective tariff that burdens the consumers for the benefit of manufacturers, or in a financial system that sacrifices wealth-producers to the money-changers, or in imperialism which barter away fundamental principles of government to enable syndicates to exploit distant lands. It is not strange either that the democratic party, jealous of any infringement upon the rights of the masses, should oppose private monopolies which, under the pretense of developing industry, simply gather in the profits of industry and reduce to a minimum the number of those who are to be the recipients of the benefits of industrial progress.

The republican party, on the other hand, has turned from the defense of human rights to the emphasizing of property rights. It has helped manufacturers to levy tribute upon the rest of the people; in return for campaign contributions it has permitted the financiers to make laws for their own enrichment, and in order to open new fields for corporations it has adopted the English colonial system. Without daring to defend the trusts as beneficial it has failed either to enforce existing laws against them or to devise new laws for their extermination.

This difference between the parties is not due to party name nor entirely to the fundamental principles advocated by the party leaders. It is partly due to environment. The republican party was in power during the war; the foundation for a great many fortunes was laid in government contracts and in legislation that was primarily enacted under the spur of what was called a war necessity. It was natural that the recipients of benefits should not only turn with gratitude to the party that granted them, but should seek to keep that party in power in order that the benefits might continue. The republican party has thus become obligated to, and identified with, predatory wealth, and it is not in position to punish those who are so influential in its counsels. Since 1896, however, the democratic party has not only stood for the rights of the plain people, but has been free from the embarrassing support of the great money magnates.

Ignorant of the West.

Those eastern statesmen who seem so ignorant of the west and so indifferent to the welfare of the territories would do well to compare the opinion expressed by Daniel Webster a little more than fifty years ago with the development which has taken place since that time. Webster was one of the greatest statesmen of his time. His long connection with public life gave him as good an opportunity to know the country and its possibilities as any one then living and yet he opposed an appropriation that was intended to establish mail connection between the Pacific coast and the Atlantic seaboard.

Those who allow their sectional prejudices or their partisanship to stand in the way of the admission of Arizona and New Mexico (the same objection cannot be made to Oklahoma) ought to read the following extract from Webster's speech in 1844:

"What do we want of the vast, worthless area, this region of savages and wild beasts, of deserts of shifting sands and whirlwinds of dust, cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put these deserts or these endless mountain ranges, impenetrable and covered to their bases with eternal snow? What can we ever hope to do with the western coast of three thousand miles, rock-bound, cheerless and uninviting and not a harbor in it? What use have we for such a country? Mr. President, I will never vote one cent from the public treasury to place the Pacific coast one inch nearer Boston than it is today."